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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000044

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EWWT](#) [KCRM](#) [MCAP](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION PUSHES SECURITY
INITIATIVES

REF: A. 09 LAGOS 370

[1](#)B. 09 LAGOS 445

[1](#)C. 08 LAGOS 463

Classified By: Consul General Donna Blair, Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Director General Temisanren Omatseye used a tour of NIMASA's training and operations center in Kirikiri, Lagos on December 22 to highlight current capacity, shortfalls, budget proposals, and strategic plans to the Ambassador and Pol/Econ Officer (notetaker). NIMASA has taken the first steps toward establishing safety and security in Nigerian waters, but it requires considerable assistance in further capacity building. NIMASA is also engaging the GON with respect to training ex-militants in the context of the post-amnesty program. END SUMMARY.

ADDRESSING SHORTFALLS IN CAPACITY

[1](#)2. (C) Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Director General Temisanren Omatseye gave the Ambassador and Pol/EconOff (notetaker) a tour of NIMASA's training and operations center at Kirikiri, Lagos on December 22 including a brief meeting with the NIMASA board of directors. Omatseye highlighted both the improvements made in NIMASA's capacities and the existing shortfalls. NIMASA is currently capable of receiving and recording any distress signals from vessels operating along the West African coast, but has no capacity to respond. NIMASA also has a Regional Maritime Awareness Capability (RMAC) repeater station which provides the capacity to see and identify ships up to 30 nautical miles off-shore, but wants to be able to monitor ship movements 200 nautical miles off shore. NIMASA possesses one search and rescue helicopter but has no capacity to do aerial surveillance. NIMASA maintains has a small twenty-four-hour health unit that can provide first aid and do triage, but not respond to major emergencies or do surgery. There is a helipad on the facilities, but the jetty and maintenance workshops are still under construction.

[1](#)3. (C) NIMASA has classroom facilities to train classes up to 40 people at a time which are currently under-utilized; Omatseye wishes to see experts from around the world provide

training on a weekly basis, adding that it was much cheaper and more effective to bring instructors in than send students abroad. There are serious training gaps particularly with respect to law enforcement capabilities. NIMASA board members asked to be allowed to submit to the U.S. Africa Partnership Station specific requests that would enable training programs to be customized to meet NIMASA's most pressing needs. Altogether, NIMASA is short roughly 60 staff, and an ongoing human resources audit will provide more precise data on needs.

14. (C) Omatseye's proposed budget for 2010 totaling 46 billion naira (USD 306 million) includes funding for the purchase of 28 patrol boats, one additional helicopter and the purchase of a long range tracking system with capacity up to 220 nautical miles. (NOTE: Nigerian media reported November 27 that NIMASA had signed a services agreement with International Mobile Satellite Organization (ISMO) of the UK for a Long Range Identification Tracking System. END NOTE.) Other plans include locating a workshop for the patrol boats on the premises for oversight and control purposes but out-sourcing the actual maintenance work. In addition, Omatseye is looking into ways to cooperate with the Nigerian Air Force, which has recently acquired assets suitable for conducting aerial surveillance. Omatseye wishes to contract services from the Protea hotel chain to manage the 42 room guest house at the training center with the objective of providing international standard accommodation for visiting lecturers etc.

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LAGOS WATERS CRAMMED WITH SUSPICIOUS SHIPS

15. (C) NIMASA personnel explained the fully operational RMAC station to the Ambassador, pointing out the large numbers of ships which were identified by radar but not transmitting automatic identification signals (AIS) as required by international maritime law. Ships with no AIS, or AIS that is turned off, are presumed to be in violation of the International Maritime Organization code and therefore suspected of engaging in illegal activities. Omatseye suggested that these ships could be engaged in smuggling, illegal oil bunkering, or illegally dumping waste into the harbor.

16. (C) Some of the ships without AIS may also be decommissioned and abandoned tankers which are anchored off Lagos harbor. (NOTE: As many as 150 of these ships are off-shore according to the Indigenous Shipowners' Association and their lights create a false shoreline at night. Contacts in the shipping community suspect that armed sea robbers and pirates use these derelict ships as their base of operations for launching attacks on vessels awaiting entrance to Lagos or already alongside at Lagos port. END NOTE) These ships are a hazard to navigation and their anchors have cut telecommunications cables in the past. Omatseye wishes, at a minimum, to force these vessels to anchor outside the shipping lanes into Lagos harbor.

TRAINING MILITANTS TO MAN A COAST GUARD

17. (C) NIMASA has agreed to take up to 250 former militants into their ongoing training program designed to train 1,000 Nigerians at maritime academies abroad. (ref C) (NOTE: This officer training program was launched in 2008 before the amnesty; it requires candidates with higher education capable of completing university equivalent studies and therefore is not ideal for the bulk of former militants, many of whom are illiterate or have only rudimentary levels of education. END NOTE) Omatseye suggested that he is more interested in training former militants to man the fleet of patrol boats

that he plans to acquire and deploy. Omatseye claimed to have spoken personally about such employment to former militant leader "Tom Polo," who was very receptive to the idea. Omatseye believes that former militants are familiar both with the Nigeria's coastal waterways and creeks and have demonstrated skills in operating small, powered craft. If rehabilitated and properly trained these ex-militants could form the core of an effective maritime law-enforcement unit, Omatseye believes.

COMMENT

18. (C) Omatseye is a dynamic leader with a palpable will to improve Nigeria's maritime environment with respect to security, safety, pollution and economic opportunities. He has launched a number of initiatives that are already bearing fruit such as the installation of RMAC, the acquisition of scavenger boats to address the pollution in Lagos harbor, the budget proposals for patrol boats, helicopters and Long Range Tracking Systems. However, he appears to be operating in a legal grey-zone. There are no clear sanctions for many of the practices (e.g. failure to use AIS, anchoring in sea lanes) he wishes to prohibit. Likewise, NIMASA's mandate to develop into an independent law enforcement arm similar to the USCG is, at best, ambivalent. Further legislation is probably needed. Nevertheless, supporting NIMASA's vigorous efforts to increase its capacity are in U.S.' interests in the short and medium term. END COMMENT.

19. ConGen Lagos coordinated this cable with Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR